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# PLAYGROUNDS *and* RECREATION CENTERS



BOATING ON LAKE MERRITT

CITY *of* OAKLAND  
CALIFORNIA

*Oakland City Recreation Dept.*

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction . . . . .	3
Athletics . . . . .	3-4
Playground Activities . . . . .	4-6
Boat House and Aquatic Sports . . . . .	6-7
Statistics showing Growth of Recreation Department . . . . .	8
Location of Playgrounds . . . . .	9-11

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# Recreation Department

*City of Oakland, California*



AKLAND is known as a city of homes, schools, churches, factories and commerce, but when the day's work is done her citizens may turn to abundant opportunities for pleasure and recreation.

The average adult has from six to eight hours per day of leisure time. That is, one-fourth to one-third of one's lifetime.

A large part of this time is given over to amusement, recreation and play of various sorts. Children spend even a greater part of their time in this way.

Healthy and normal play and recreation make for better and more efficient citizenship. Play is the important and vital part of a child's development, and some form of recreation is also necessary to the adult if he is to achieve his maximum power. Even the old horse when turned out to pasture plays and frolics and returns to work with renewed giner.

Oakland may well be called the City of Playgrounds. The Oakland Recreation Department maintains thirty-eight playgrounds and recreation centers the year 'round. Thirty of these are school yard playgrounds and eight are large park recreation centers. In addition to the playgrounds for children, many sports and pastimes are provided for the adults. The recreation grounds are becoming more popular every day. Tennis, baseball, football, volley ball and folk dancing are the favorite sports for grown ups. Social center buildings are available for club meetings, lectures, entertainments and dancing. Each recreation center or playground is in charge of trained supervisors whose duties are to lead and protect the children in their play and to promote and organize games, sports and other activities for all patrons of the grounds.

All of these opportunities are under the management of the Board of Playground Directors and are free to the public. Good behavior is the only password.

The following are some of the principal activities to be found in the recreation grounds:

## ATHLETICS.

Both informal and organized athletic games of all kinds are provided on the playgrounds. A number of baseball leagues are conducted and any boy who wishes to may engage in the national game. There are ten public tennis courts in Oakland, which receive constant use during the leisure hours of the people. The courts are frequently used for exhibition and match games by expert players. Maurice McLaughlin, world's amateur tennis champion, occasionally uses the courts at Mosswood park for exhibition games and pronounces these courts to be equal to the best.

Several basketball courts are provided at each playground and leagues organized in which as many as five or six teams are entered from a single playground. Volley ball is a new game, but during the past year has become very popular. During the fall season football

is given much attention, the Soccer, American and Rugby games all being played. The Oakland and Polytechnic High schools used the Bay View football field last season for practice and match games.

Field and track meets are frequently held during the spring season. Classifications, events and leagues are provided in the above sports so that any amateur may enter, regardless of age.

The following is the yearly athletic schedule of the Oakland playgrounds. Participation in these events is open and free to all:

Section 1. The games, sports and athletic events on the playgrounds shall be classified as follows:

a. Major Sports—Baseball, track and field meets, soccer football, swimming, tennis, volley ball, German bat ball, hand ball.

b. Minor Sports—Basketball, rugby football.

Contestants in the minor sports shall be classified according to weight; while contestants in the major sports shall be classified as follows:

Bantams: 12 years of age; 4 ft. 10 in. in height

Midgets: 13 years of age; 5 ft. in height

Intermediates: 15 years of age; 5 ft. 5 in. in height

Juniors: 17 years of age; 5 ft. 10 in. in height

Seniors: Under 21 years and no height qualification, or older by agreement.

Section 2. Playground games, sports and athletic events, in accordance with the seasons, shall be played as follows:

1. Spring sports shall start the 15th of March and end with the close of school, and shall include:

Baseball: to begin the first Saturday in April.

Individual athletic tests: to be conducted from March 15, until the holding of the track meet.

Track meet: to be held in the latter part of April.

2. Summer sports shall start with the beginning of the summer vacation and end with the opening of school.

Baseball.

Tennis tournament.

3. Fall sports shall start with the opening of school and close with the beginning of the Christmas vacation.

Swimming meet—Last Saturday in August.

Handball tournament—September 1st.

Rugby football—September 1st.

Basketball—For the 80, 95, 110 and 120 pound classes to start October 15th.

4. Winter sports shall start with the Christmas vacation and end March 15th.

Soccer football.

Basketball for the 130, 145 and unlimited classes.

This schedule applies to the large formal leagues only. Literally hundreds of other varieties of games are played all the year round.

#### GYMNASIUM.

Outdoor gymnasium apparatus is provided on nearly all the playgrounds. Here the supervisors instruct on the rings, bars and in tumbling, wrestling, etc.

## **MANUAL TRAINING.**

On several of the recreation grounds opportunities for boys' and girls' occupation work are offered. Model building, clay modeling, basketry and raffia are the principal branches taught.

## **SMALL CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT.**

Supervisors are required to teach a great number of circle, singing and running games for the benefit of small children coming to the playgrounds. Story telling hours are occasionally held when professional story-tellers from the Oakland Library Department come and entertain the children with tales about adventures, fairies and folk-lore. The sand box is always in evidence and is well patronized by the little tots.

## **FOLK DANCING.**

Folk dancing is an important department for girls and small children. Almost every day on each playground classes are held and the children learn to dance the folk dances of the old and new world.

## **CLUBS.**

A favorable method for handling groups on the recreation ground is by organizing them into clubs for various purposes. There are outdoor women's clubs for the mothers, older sisters and friends of the children, groups of Campfire Girls for girls between twelve and eighteen years of age, Blue Bird groups for girls under twelve, boys' clubs formed for numerous purposes, and dramatic clubs.

The clubs are organized with a president, secretary and various committees and are responsible for their own activities with such assistance as may be given them by the supervisors.

Any person may join a club by vote of the members, or a new club will be organized when a large enough group is formed.

## **FIELD HOUSES.**

The field houses on the various playgrounds are equipped with shower baths, dressing rooms, toilets, lavatories and lockers. Clean towels are supplied for the shower baths. There is also maintained on each playground a supply of athletic materials, such as baseballs, footballs, basketballs, bats and games. These supplies are issued to the patrons very much in the same manner as books are issued from the Public Library, except that all supplies must be used on the playground and must be returned before closing time each day. All these facilities are free to the public.

## **RECREATION CENTER BUILDINGS.**

Several recreation center buildings are maintained by the department and are equipped with halls, game rooms, committee meeting rooms and dressing rooms. These buildings are used for club meetings, dramatics, entertainments, games and social purposes. Free permits for the use of these buildings may be obtained by any responsible organization which will comply with the rules and regulations.

## **WALKING TRIPS.**

During the summer season frequent trips (or hikes) are planned and conducted into the nearby woods and hills. Many boys and girls cannot go away for the summer vacation, and these trips afford them an opportunity of enjoying the country without expense.

## MUNICIPAL BOAT HOUSE.

The new municipal boat house and recreational activities on Lake Merritt have recently been placed under the control of the Board of Playground Directors.

The boat house is equipped with row boats, sail boats, canoes and large whale boats for use for crew rowing. Lockers and mooring privileges are provided for privately owned boats. An excursion launch is in operation and makes regular excursion trips around the lake.

During the month of October 1914 (the second month of operation of the boat house) 11,119 persons went out in boats. Of this number over half the rides were practically free, being in the form of crew rowing for school boys and girls and the balance in private boats, of which there are now 107.



MUNICIPAL BOAT HOUSE—LAKE MERRITT.

In spite of all the gratis use of this aquatic playground of the City of Oakland and the consideration chiefly for the welfare of the public and in spite of the reduction to half of the former price for rent boats, this new institution has more than paid its own operating expenses.

## AQUATIC SPORTS.

The chief source of interest in aquatic sports on Lake Merritt is due to the introduction of the crew rowing in the twelve-oared navy whale boats. These boats, 28 to 30 feet long, are used in the navy for rowing practice and for racing. They are the lightest and most graceful model and yet exceptionally seaworthy. A number of these were purchased by the City of Oakland at public auction from the Mare Island Navy Yard and placed on Lake Merritt a few months ago.

It was not long before various clubs and schools took advantage of this facility. The boats are provided with copper air tanks to insure perfect safety and are very steady because of their size—thus being adapted to

school rowing. The inspiration of team work in twelve persons pulling at the oars at the same time was responsible for the rapid gain in popularity of this sport.

Crews were formed from the following schools and clubs:

Grammar Schools—Prescott, Intermediate No. 1, Cole, Jefferson, Lincoln, Garfield, Sequoia, Clawson, Melrose Heights, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Lockwood.

High Schools—Fremont, Oakland, Berkeley, Polytechnic and University High Schools.

University of California, Mills College, Miss Horton's School, Miss Barnard's Kindergarten Training School.

Playground Crews—de Fremery, Mosswood and Bushrod Women's Outdoor Clubs, Allendale Girls' Crew, Poplar Street Playground Crew, and Bonita Club.

Working Boys and Girls Crews—The Spartan Club, Alerts, Mosswoods and Y. W. C. A.

Some of these schools and clubs enumerated are represented by a number of crews, which gives some conception of the number to date who are receiving the benefit of this wholesome outdoor activity. In order to stimulate the interest in this sport regattas are held on the lake on the last Saturday of each month.



#### ANNUAL MAY FESTIVAL.

##### FESTIVALS.

One of the most interesting activities in the playgrounds is the preparation and production of festivals, pageants and celebrations. Every national holiday, such as Independence Day, Washington's Birthday, and Admission Day, is celebrated with suitable ceremonies at each playground.

The Annual Playground May Festival is a fixed institution in Oakland and is looked forward to by thousands of our citizens. In 1914 the May Festival was

held in Lakeside park. 1500 children participated in the various pageants. About 10,000 people witnessed the production.

## GROWTH OF DEPARTMENT.

### ATTENDANCE.

Fiscal Year.	No. of Persons attending Playgrounds.
1908-09 (one month) . . . . .	595
1909-10 (eight months) . . . . .	11,125
1910-11 (twelve months) . . . . .	280,165
1911-12 (twelve months) . . . . .	432,486
1912-13 (twelve months) . . . . .	738,805
1913-14 (twelve months) . . . . .	978,569
1914-15 (six months) . . . . .	697,188

### GAMES PLAYED.

	Baseball.	Basketball.	Volleyball
1908-09 . . . . .	112	52	29
1909-10 . . . . .	1,224	365	1,002
1910-11 . . . . .	5,012	2,647	12,687
1911-12 . . . . .	10,563	3,073	4,371
1912-13 . . . . .	15,098	4,323	8,030
1913-14 . . . . .	28,018	8,654	24,274
1914-15 (six months) . . . . .	19,473	9,125	17,506

880 Sunday baseball permits issued July 1, 1913, to June 30, 1914.

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYES.

	July.	December.
1909 . . . . .	5	3
1910 . . . . .	15	11
1911 . . . . .	27	22
1912 . . . . .	50	49
1913 . . . . .	53	49
1914 . . . . .	64	71

### NUMBER OF GROUNDS MAINTAINED.

1908-09 . . . . .	2
1909-10 . . . . .	5
1910-11 . . . . .	9
1911-12 . . . . .	11
1912-13 . . . . .	13
1913-14 . . . . .	15
1914-15 . . . . .	38

### FINANCES.

	Amount of Appropriation.	Maintenance.	How Expended.
			Improvements.
1908-09 . . . . .	\$ 750.00	\$ 2,491.88	\$ 6,989.09
1909-10 . . . . .	9,480.97	11,658.51	6,111.14
1910-11 . . . . .	19,769.65	18,885.89	21,604.61
1911-12 . . . . .	40,000.00	32,390.16	17,994.90
1912-13 . . . . .	50,000.00	43,865.47	33,962.58
1913-14 . . . . .	77,400.00		
1914-15* . . . . .	77,839.00		

\*(Present Fiscal Year).

These statistics show the remarkable expansion of the recreation work in Oakland. It will be seen that a large part of each appropriation has been spent in permanent improvements, and the cost of maintenance has been comparatively low.

The people of the community feel that they are getting a direct return in use and service for the money expended in playgrounds and recreation. Great credit is due the Board of Playground Directors for Oakland's splendid and economical development of the Recreation Department and its activities. The members of this Board receive no compensation and give much valuable time and thought to the improvement and operation of our playgrounds.

## **LOCATION OF OAKLAND PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION CENTERS AND HOW TO GET TO THEM.**

**MUNICIPAL BOAT HOUSE**—Oak street, near Fourteenth street; telephone Oakland 3936. Any eastbound car at Twelfth or Thirteenth and Broadway.

### **Park Playgrounds.**

**BAY VIEW**—Eighteenth and Wood streets. Any car marked S. P. Depot at Twelfth or Fourteenth and Broadway.

**BELLA VISTA**—Eleventh avenue and East Twenty-eighth street; telephone Merritt 790. Thirteenth avenue and East Twenty-eighth street car at Thirteenth and Broadway.

**BUSHROD**—Sixtieth street and Shattuck avenue; telephone Piedmont 5612. Telegraph or Shattuck avenue car at Fourteenth and Broadway.

**DE FREMERY**—Eighteenth and Poplar streets; telephone Oakland 2488. West Sixteenth street car at Fourteenth and Broadway.

**GOLDEN GATE**—Sixty-second street and San Pablo avenue; telephone Piedmont 8478. Richmond car.

**MOSSWOOD**—Thirty-sixth and Webster streets; telephone Piedmont 130. College avenue car at Fourteenth and Broadway.

**PARK BOULEVARD**—Park Boulevard and Newton avenue; telephone Merritt 4639. Fourth avenue car at Thirteenth and Broadway.

**POPLAR STREET**—Thirty-second and Peralta streets; telephone Piedmont 8392. Grand avenue and Hollis street car (westbound) at Fourteenth and Broadway.

### **School Playgrounds No. 1.**

**ALLENDALE**—Penniman avenue and Short street. Car marked "Allendale" at Twelfth and Broadway.

**ELMHURST**—Ninety-eighth avenue between Cherry and Plymouth. Elmhurst car.

**EMERSON**—Forty-ninth street between Lawton and Shafter. Telegraph avenue car.

**GARFIELD**—Twenty-third avenue and East Sixteenth street. Fifty-fifth avenue car.

**HAWTHORNE**—Tallant street between Fruitvale avenue and Sausal creek. East Fourteenth street car.

**LOCKWOOD**—East Fourteenth street between Sixty-seventh and Sixty-eighth avenues. East Fourteenth street or Hayward car.

**LONGFELLOW**—Market between Apgar and Thirty-ninth streets. San Pablo avenue or Grove street car.

**MELROSE**—Fifty-second avenue and East Fourteenth street. East Fourteenth street or Hayward car.

**PRESCOTT**—Tenth and Campbell streets. Grove-West Eighth street car.

**TOMPKINS**—Fifth and Linden streets. Grove-West Eighth street car.



**GIRLS' SECTION—DE FREMERY PLAYGROUND.**

**School Playgrounds No. 2.**

(Supervised after school hours only by teachers.)

**CLAREMONT**—College avenue between Shafter avenue and Birch Court. College avenue car.

**COLE**—Tenth street between Union and Poplar streets. West Twelfth street car.

**DEWEY**—East Twelfth street between Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth avenues. East Fourteenth street car.

**DURANT**—Twenty-eighth street between Grove and West streets. Grove street car.

**FRANKLIN**—Ninth avenue between East Fifteenth and East Sixteenth streets. Dimond car.

FRUITVALE—Boston between School and Montana streets. Dimond car.

GRANT—Broadway and Twenty-ninth street. Piedmont or College avenue car.

HARRISON—Fourth and Harrison streets. Water street car.

HIGHLAND—"A" street between Eighty-fifth and Eighty-sixth avenues. Elmhurst car.

JEFFERSON—Carrington between Thirty-ninth and Fortieth avenues. Allendale car.

LAFAYETTE—West street between Seventeenth and Eighteenth streets. West Sixteenth street car.

LAKEVIEW—Perry between Van Buren and Grand avenues. Grand avenue car.

LAUREL—Kansas between Brown and Patterson avenues. Allendale car.

LAZEAR—Park street between Elmwood and Railroad avenues. Twenty-third avenue-Alameda car.

LINCOLN—Alice street between Tenth and Eleventh streets. East Eighth street car.

MANZANITA—East Twenty-sixth street between Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth avenues. East Eighteenth street car.

McCHESNEY—Thirteenth avenue between East Thirty-seventh and East Thirty-eighth streets. Fourth avenue car.

MELROSE HEIGHTS—Ignacio between Congress and Vicksburg streets. Fifty-fifth avenue car.

PIEDMONT—Piedmont avenue and Echo street. Piedmont avenue car.

SANTA FE—Market street between Fifty-third and Fifty-fourth streets. San Pablo car.

SEQUOIA—Scenic street between Lincoln and Laguna. Dimond car.

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